

MSFC Safety Bulletin



Low Back Injury Leads to Lost-Time Mishap

What Happened?

- An employee was scheduled for a 2-week temporary duty assignment at a distant work site.

- Doctors found that a ruptured disc in his lower spine was causing the pain and numbness. He prescribed 'surgery' and time off from work to promote healing.

What Can Be Done?

- The employee prepared and carried a heavy suitcase. He used improper lifting and handling techniques to maneuver the heavy load during travel.
- He experienced a steady increase in the severity and intensity of right foot numbness and right leg pain.
- While checking in for his return flight, the airline informed him that his suitcase was about 50 pounds overweight.
- After a painful weekend at home, the employee was unable to report to work on Monday.
- Use proper lifting techniques, and respect your own physical limitations, when lifting loads manually.
- Know that proper movement patterns are more important than ever when back health is fragile.
- Avoid twisting the body when bearing the weight of a load.
- Control load size, weight, and configuration to assure they are within your personal safety zone.
- Get human or mechanical assistance with lifting whenever load characteristics approach the limits of your personal safety zone.

MSFC Sitewide Safety Rules, in Appendix E of MPG 8715.1, say that *every employee*:

"Shall use proper manual lifting techniques and limit lifts to personal physical capabilities, but in no case more than 40 pounds. Seek assistance from another employee when the item is greater than 40 pounds or too bulky to handle (do not exceed 40 pounds per employee)."